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March 7, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Shurts

SUBJECT: Update on the NOAA Hatchery Review, as well as brief update on the status of NOAA's recovery planning effort and on completion of the AHA analysis

The agenda for the March meeting includes an update on the recently announced NOAA Hatchery Review. We also plan to add a quick update on the related topics of NOAA's recovery planning and the development of recovery targets and the Council's interest in adding biological objectives to the program and in seeing the completion of the "AHA" analysis as technical preparation for the objective setting exercise.

The main focus of the agenda item will be on what is being called the NOAA Hatchery Review. NOAA has hired Jim Waldo of the Tacoma office of the law firm Gordon Thomas Honeywell to oversee a collaborative process to review hatcheries and harvest in the Columbia. Attached is a copy of the federal caucus press release announcing this initiative.

We expect at this time that Mr. Waldo will be here to lead the briefing for the Council. His purpose will be to inform the Council on how the initiative is shaping up, about the relationship of this effort to the broader recovery planning effort, and about how what he is leading and the work the Council is doing might be coordinated. Also attached is a letter to that end that Mr. Waldo sent to the Council last Friday.

NOAA held a workshop toward the end of February to display the substantial progress being made by the Interior Columbia Technical Recovery Team (TRT) in its technical effort to assess the status of the listed ESUs and their constituent populations and to propose criteria for viable populations and ESUs. There are no documents available yet to attach here, but we can provide a short update as to the nature of the progress.

The developments coming out of the TRT have relevance to the effort Mr. Waldo is leading, and vice versa, which is why we want to talk about these items at the same time. And both have significant implications for the Council's interest in adding biological objectives to the Fish and Wildlife Program at the ecological province scale, and especially for the technical preparation for the that effort that has focused on the completion of the AHA analysis across the anadromous subbasins of the Columbia.

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